

For Immediate Release
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Washington NRCS To Hold Informational Sessions for Producers Interested in the Conservation Security Program

Waterville, WA - Informational meetings are scheduled from June 23-24 for producers who are interested in the new Conservation Security Program (CSP), according to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The Moses Coulee Watershed in central Washington was selected as one of the nation's 18 priority watersheds for this summer's CSP signup. This program is designed to financially reward farmers and ranchers who are actively working to conserve natural resources on their lands.

The CSP application process is open to all eligible producers in the Moses Coulee Watershed. Producers who have land in the watershed should plan to attend one of the informational meetings (see list below) for additional details about CSP and producer eligibility.

NRCS has also released a self-assessment workbook for potential participants in CSP. The initial self-assessment will help producers identify whether their individual agricultural operation meets sign-up criteria and answer the question, "Do I address minimum soil and water quality criteria on the land I manage?" These workbooks will be available at the meetings and on-line at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>.

The meetings will cover:

- What is CSP?
- Who is Eligible for CSP?
- How Can I Apply for the Program?
- What are the Benefits of CSP?
- What are the Requirements of CSP?

"Producers in the Moses Coulee Watershed are known for their work to conserve natural resources," said Gus Hughbanks, state conservationist with NRCS. "These informational meetings will provide the opportunity to learn more about CSP, which is designed to financially reward outstanding conservation work on private lands."

Nationally, the fiscal year 2004 CSP budget of \$41.4 million will allow NRCS to write 3,000 to 5,000 contracts. The contracts will be determined in a national selection process.

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CSP is a voluntary program that supports ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural working lands and enhances the condition of America's natural resources. Additional information on CSP is at <http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov>.

CSP Informational Meetings

June 23rd, Palisades

Palisades Grange 8:30 a.m.

June 23rd, Waterville

Waterville Fairgrounds 7:00 p.m.

June 24th, St. Andrews

St. Andrews Grange 8:30 a.m.

June 24th, Mansfield

Mansfield Grange 7:00 p.m.

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